

Proclamation 6186 of September 24, 1990**National Hispanic Heritage Month, 1990**

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Each year, we pause during National Hispanic Heritage Month to recognize the many contributions that men and women of Spanish and Latin American descent have made to our country's history and culture.

Journeying to the New World nearly half a millennium ago, Spanish conquistadors were among the first Europeans to explore and establish settlements in what is now U.S. territory. In 1513, Ponce de Leon was the first European to discover Florida; in 1528, Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca became the first Spaniard to land on Texas soil; by 1565—more than 25 years before British colonists landed at Jamestown—the Spanish had established a permanent settlement at St. Augustine. By that time, other Spaniards, including Franciscan missionaries, had begun to explore the Southwest. During the second half of the 18th century, the Franciscans established a chain of missions along the California coast. These early mission sites, known as "El Camino Real," grew into the thriving cities of San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Centuries after men such as Coronado and Father Junipero Serra journeyed into the vast, uncharted territory of the New World, the influence of the Spanish colonial empire remains evident in communities throughout the southern and western United States.

The rich legacy we celebrate during National Hispanic Heritage Month is not limited, however, to the magnificent architecture and fascinating history and folklore of the American Southwest. Over the years, Hispanic Americans have made their mark across the country and in virtually every aspect of American life.

Time and again throughout our Nation's history, Hispanic Americans—many of whom have come to this country in search of the freedom denied to them by repressive regimes in their ancestral homelands—have demonstrated their dedication to the ideals upon which the United States is founded. In peacetime, as well as in times of conflict and peril, they have faithfully defended the principles of freedom and representative government. They have worked for the advancement of human rights and democratic ideals around the world, and they have helped to support many of our neighbors in Central and South America and the Caribbean in their own struggles for liberty and self-determination.

With faith and hard work, Hispanic Americans have reaped the blessings of freedom and opportunity, building strong families and proud communities and earning positions of leadership in business, education, sports, science, and the arts. Hispanic Americans have also excelled in government, serving as councilmen, mayors, governors, and as members of State legislatures, the Congress, and the Cabinet.

In December of 1989, to help ensure that young Hispanic Americans have ample opportunities to develop and demonstrate their great talent and potential, I directed my Secretary of Education, Dr. Lauro Cavazos, to form the Domestic Policy Council Task Force on Hispanic Education.

The Task Force has worked to find ways to improve Federal education programs that serve Hispanic Americans. By enhancing the educational opportunities available to Americans of Spanish and Latin American descent, we can help to promote their continued social and economic advancement.

In recognition of the outstanding achievements of Hispanic Americans, the Congress, by Joint Resolution approved September 17, 1968, as amended by Public Law 100-402, has authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation designating the month beginning September 15 and ending October 15 as "National Hispanic Heritage Month."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month beginning September 15, 1990, and ending October 15, 1990, as National Hispanic Heritage Month. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Editorial note: For the President's remarks of Sept. 24, 1990 on signing Proclamation 6186, see the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* (vol. 26, p. 1437).

Proclamation 6187 of September 26, 1990

Gold Star Mother's Day, 1990

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Few Americans could have a more profound understanding of the price of freedom than our Nation's Gold Star Mothers. These proud and courageous women are the mothers of U.S. military personnel who have perished in the line of duty.

Anyone who has been blessed with children knows that there is no greater heartache than losing a son or daughter. The mothers of those brave and selfless Americans who have died to defend the lives and liberty of others have suffered greatly, yet they have also inspired us with their unflinching faith and patriotism. These women, known as Gold Star Mothers, merit our lasting respect and gratitude.

In his now-famous letter to Mrs. Lydia Bixby, a Boston widow who was reported to have lost several sons during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln wrote:

I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming, but I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic that they died to save. I pray that the Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.